

Sondheim 101 • Class 9 Featured Lyrics: Sweeney Todd
Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1979)

“The Ballad of Sweeney Todd”

A MAN:

Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd.
His skin was pale and his eye was odd.
He shaved the faces of gentlemen
Who never thereafter were heard of again.
He trod a path that few have trod,
Did Sweeney Todd,
The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

ANOTHER MAN:

He kept a shop in London town,
Of fancy clients and good renown.
And what if none of their souls were saved?
They went to their maker impeccably shaved
By Sweeney,
by Sweeney Todd,
The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

COMPANY:

Swing your razor wide, Sweeney!
Hold it to the skies!
Freely flows the blood of those
Who moralize!

His needs were few, his room was bare:
A lavabo and a fancy chair,
A mug of suds, and a leather strop,
An apron, a towel, a pail, and a mop.
For neatness he deserved a nod,
Did Sweeney Todd,
The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Inconspicuous Sweeney was,
Quick, and quiet and clean ‘e was.
Back of his smile, under his word,
Sweeney heard music that nobody heard.

Sweeney pondered and Sweeney planned,
Like a perfect machine ‘e planned.
Sweeney was smooth, Sweeney was subtle,
Sweeney would blink and rats would scuttle.
Inconspicuous Sweeney was,
Quick, and quiet and clean ‘e was.
Like a perfect machine ‘e was.
Was Sweeney!

Sweeney! Sweeney! Sweeeeeeneeeeee!

[Sweeney Todd appears]

TODD, COMPANY:

Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd!
He served a dark and a vengeful god.

TODD:

What happened then—well that's the play,
And he wouldn't want us to give it away,
Not Sweeney.

TODD, COMPANY:

Not Sweeney Todd.
The Demon barber of Fleet Street.

“The Barber and His Wife”

TODD:

There's a hole in the world
Like a great black pit
And the vermin of the world
Inhabit it,
And it's morals aren't worth
What a pig could spit,
And it goes by the name of London.

At the top of the hole
Sit the privileged few,
Making mock of the vermin
In the lower zoo,
Turning beauty into filth and greed.
I too
Have sailed the world and seen its wonders,
For the cruelty of men
Is as wondrous as Peru,
But there's no place like London!

There was a barber and his wife,
And she was beautiful.
A foolish barber and his wife.
She was his reason and his life,
And she was beautiful.
And she was virtuous.
And he was—
Naive.

There was another man who saw
That she was beautiful,
A pious vulture of the law,
Who with a gesture of his claw

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Removed the barber from his plate.
Then there was nothing but to wait
And she would fall,
So soft,
So young,
So lost,
And oh, so beautiful!

ANTHONY:
And the lady, sir—did she—succumb?

TODD:
Oh, that was many years ago . . .
I doubt if anyone would know.

There's a hole in the world
Like a great black pit
And it's filled with people
Who are filled with shit,
And the vermin of the world
Inhabit it . . .

“The Worst Pies in London”

MRS. LOVETT:
Wait! What's yer rush? What's yer hurry?
You gave me such a—
Fright. I thought you was a ghost.
Half a minute, can'tcher?
Sit! Sit yer down! Sit!

All I meant is that I
Haven't seen a customer for weeks.

Did you come in for a pie, sir?
Do forgive me if me head's a little vague—
Ugh!
What is that?
But you'd think we had the plague—
From the way that people—
Keep avoiding—
No you don't!

Heaven knows I try, sir!
Yich!
But there's no one comes in even to inhale—
Tsk!
Right you are, sir. Would you like a drop of
ale?
Mind you, I can hardly blame them—
These are probably the worst pies in London.
I know why nobody cares to take them—

I *should* know,
I make them.
But good? No,
The worst pies in London—
Even that's polite.
The worst pies in London—
If you doubt it, take a bite!

Is that just disgusting?
You have to concede it.
It's nothing but crusting—
Here, drink this, you'll need it.
The worst pies in London—

And no wonder, with the price of meat
What it is
When you get it.
Never
Thought I'd live to see the day
Men'd think it was a treat
Finding poor
Animals
Wot are dying in the street.
Mrs. Mooney has a pie shop,
Does a business, but I notice something
weird—
Lately, all her neighbors' cats have
disappeared.

Have to hand it to her—
What I calls
Enterprise,
Poppin' pussies into pies!
Wouldn't do in my shop—
Just the thought of it's enough to make you
sick.
And I'm telling you them pussycats is quick!
No denying times is hard, sir—
Even harder than
The worst pies in London.
Only lard and nothing more—

Is that just revolting?
All greasy and gritty.
It looks like it's molting,
And tastes like—
Well, pity
A woman alone
With limited wind
And the worst pies in London!
Ah, sir,
Times is hard. Times is hard.

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“My Friends”

TODD:
 These are my friends,
 See how they glisten.
 See this one shine,
 How he smiles in the light,
 My friend, my faithful friend.

Speak to me, friend.
 Whisper, I'll listen.
 I know, I know,
 You've been locked out of sight
 All these years—
 Like me, my friend.

Well, I've come home
 To find you waiting.
 Home,
 And we're together,
 And we'll do wonders,
 Won't we?

<p>TODD: You there, my friend. Come, let me hold you</p> <p>Now with a sigh You grow warm In my hand, My friend, My clever friend.</p> <p>Right now, my friends, Soon I'll unfold you. Soon you'll know splendors You never have dreamed</p> <p>All your days, My lucky friends. Till now your shine Was merely silver.</p>	<p>MRS. LOVETT: I'm your friend too, Mr. Todd. If you only knew, Mr. Todd— Ooh, Mr. Todd, You're warm In my hand. You've come home. Always had a fondness for you, I did.</p> <p>Never you fear, Mr. Todd You can move in here, Mr. Todd. Splendors you never have dreamed</p> <p>All your days Will be yours. I'm your friend.</p> <p>Don't they shine beautiful?</p>
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Friends,
 You shall drip
 rubies,
 You'll soon drip
 precious
 Rubies,

You'll soon drip
 precious
 Rubies . . .

TODD [spoken]:
 My right arm is complete again!

“Pretty Women”

JUDGE TURPIN:
 You see, sir, a man infatuate with love,
 Her ardent and eager slave.
 So fetch the pomade and pumice stone
 And lend me a more seductive tone,
 A sprinkling, perhaps, of French cologne,
 But first, sir, I think—a shave.

TODD:
 The closest I ever gave.

[Todd whistles cheerfully]

JUDGE TURPIN:
 You are in a merry mood today Mr. Todd.

TODD:
 'Tis your delight, sir, catching fire
 From one man to the next.

JUDGE TURPIN:
 'Tis true, sir, love can still inspire
 The blood to pound, the heart leap higher.

BOTH:
 What more, what more can man require—?

JUDGE TURPIN: Than love, sir?

TODD: More than love, sir.

JUDGE TURPIN: What's, sir?

TODD: Women.

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JUDGE TURPIN: Ah, yes, women.

TODD: Pretty women.

Now then, my friend,
Now to your purpose.
Patience, enjoy it.
Revenge can't be taken in haste.

JUDGE TURPIN:
Make haste and if we wed,
You'll be commended, sir!

TODD:
My lord . . .
And who, may it be said,
Is your intended, sir?

JUDGE TURPIN:
My ward.
And pretty as a rosebud.

TODD: Pretty as her mother?

JUDGE TURPIN: What? What was that?

TODD:
Oh, nothing sir. Nothing. May we proceed?

Pretty women . . .
Fascinating . . .
Sipping coffee,
Dancing . . .
Pretty women
Are a wonder.
Pretty women . . .

Sitting in the window or
Standing on the stair,
Something in them
Cheers the air.

Pretty women . . .

JUDGE TURPIN: Silhouetted . . .

TODD: Stay within you . . .

JUDGE TURPIN: Glancing . . .

TODD: Stay forever . . .

JUDGE TURPIN: Breathing lightly . . .

TODD: Pretty women . . .

BOTH:
Pretty women!
Blowing out their candles or
Combing out their hair . . .

JUDGE TURPIN:
Then they leave . . .
Even when they
leave you
And vanish,
they somehow
Can still remain
There with you,
There with you.

TODD:

Even when
they leave,
They still

Are
There.
They're there.

BOTH: Ah! Pretty women . . .

TODD: At their mirrors . . .

JUDGE TURPIN: In their gardens . . .

TODD: Letter-writing . . .

JUDGE TURPIN: Flower-picking . . .

TODD: Weather-watching . . .

BOTH:
How they make a man sing!
Proof of heaven
As you're living—
Pretty women, sir!

JUDGE TURPIN:
Pretty women, yes!

Pretty women, sir!

Pretty women!
Pretty women, sir . . .

TODD:
Pretty women,
here's to
Pretty women,
all the
Pretty women.

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“Epiphany”

TODD:

I had him!
His throat was bare
Beneath my hand—!

MRS. LOVETT:

There, there, dear. Don't fret.

TODD:

No, I had him!
His throat was there
And he'll never come again!

MRS. LOVETT:

Easy now.
Hush, love, hush.
I keep telling you—

TODD: When?

MRS. LOVETT: What's your rush?

TODD:

Why did I wait?
You told me to wait!
Now he'll never come again!

There's a hole in the world
Like a great black pit
And it's filled with people
Who are filled with shit
And the vermin of the world
Inhabit it—
But not for long!

They all deserve to die!
Tell you why, Mrs. Lovett,
Tell you why:
Because in all of the whole human race, Mrs.
Lovett,

There are two kinds of men and only two:
There's the one staying put
In his proper place
And the one with his foot
In the other one's face.
Look at me, Mrs Lovett,
Look at you!

No, we all deserve to die!
Even you, Mrs. Lovett,

Even I.

Because the lives of the wicked should be
made brief.
For the rest of us, death will be a relief.
We all deserve to die!

And I'll never see Johanna,
No I'll never hug my girl to me—
Finished!

[Turning to the audience]

All right! You, sir,
How about a shave?
Come and visit
Your good friend Sweeney!
You sir, too, sir?
Welcome to the grave.
I will have vengeance,
I will have salvation.

Who, sir? You, sir?
No one's in the chair—
Come on, come on,
Sweeney's waiting!
I want you bleeders!
You, sir—anybody!
Gentlemen, now don't be shy!

Not one man, no,
Nor ten men,
Nor a hundred
Can assuage me—
I will have you!

And I will get him back
Even as he gloats.
In the meantime I'll practice
On less honorable throats.
And my Lucy lies in ashes
And I'll never see my girl again,
But the work waits,
I'm alive at last
And I'm full of joy!

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“A Little Priest”

MRS. LOVETT:
Seems a downright shame . . .

TODD: Shame?

MRS. LOVETT:
Seems an awful waste . . .
Such a nice, plump frame
Wot's-his-name
Has . . .
Had . . .
Has . . .
Nor it can't be traced.

Business needs a lift,
Debts to be erased.
Think of it as thrift,
As a gift . . .
If you get my drift . . .
No?
Seems an awful waste.

I mean,
With the price of meat what it is,
When you get it,
If you get it—

TODD: Ah!

MRS. LOVETT: Good, you got it!

Take, for instance,
Mrs. Mooney and her pie shop:
Business never better using only pussy cats
and toast.
And a pussy's good for maybe six or seven
at the most.
And I'm sure they can't compare as far as
taste . . .

TODD:	MRS. LOVETT:
Mrs. Lovett, What a charming notion, Eminently practical and yet Appropriate, as always Mrs. Lovett, how I've lived	Well, it does seem a Waste . . .

TODD:	MRS. LOVETT:
Without you all these years I'll never know! How delectable!	It's an idea . . . Think about it . . . Lots of other gentlemen'll Soon be coming for a shave, Won't they? Think of All them Pies!
Also undetectable.	
How choice! How rare!	

TODD:
For what's the sound of the world out there?

MRS. LOVETT:
What, Mr. Todd, what, Mr. Todd,
What is that sound?

TODD:
Those crunching noises pervading the air?

MRS. LOVETT:
Yes, Mr. Todd, yes, Mr. Todd,
Yes, all around.

TODD:
It's man devouring man, my dear—

BOTH:
And who are we to deny it in here?

TODD [spoken]: These are desperate times,
Mrs. Lovett, and desperate measures are
called for!

MRS. LOVETT [*Proffering an imaginary pie*]:
Here we are, hot from the oven.

TODD: What is that?

MRS. LOVETT:
It's priest.
Have a little priest.

TODD: Is it really good?

MRS. LOVETT:
Sir, it's too good, at least.
Then again, they don't commit sins of the
flesh,

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So it's pretty fresh.

TODD: Awful lot of fat.

MRS. LOVETT: Only where it sat.

TODD:
Haven't you got poet,
Or something like that?

MRS. LOVETT:
No, you see, the trouble with poet
Is how do you know it's
Deceased?
Try the priest.

TODD [spoken]: Heavenly. Not as hearty as
bishop, perhaps, but not as bland as curate
either.

MRS. LOVETT [spoken]: And good for
business—always leaves you wanting more.
Trouble is, we only get it in Sundays . . .

[sings] Lawyer's rather nice.

TODD: If it's for a price.

MRS. LOVETT:
Order something else, though, to follow,
Since no one should swallow
It twice.

TODD: Anything that's lean.

MRS. LOVETT:
Well, then, if you're British and loyal,
You might enjoy Royal
Marine.
Anyway, it's clean.
Though, of course, it tastes of wherever it's
been.

TODD:
Is that squire,
On the fire?

MRS. LOVETT:
Mercy no, sir,
Look closer,
You'll notice it's grocer.

TODD:
Looks thicker,
More like vicar.

MRS. LOVETT:
No, it has to be grocer—it's green.

TODD: The history of the world, my love . . .

MRS. LOVETT:
Save a lot of graves,
Do a lot of relatives favors . . .

TODD:
Is those below serving those up above.

MRS. LOVETT:
Everybody shaves,
So there should be plenty of flavors . . .

TODD: How gratifying for once to know—

BOTH:
That those above will serve those down
below!

TODD: What is that?

MRS. LOVETT:
Now, let me see . . .
We've got tinker.

TODD: Something pinker.

MRS. LOVETT: Tailor?

TODD: Something—paler.

MRS. LOVETT: Butler?

TODD: Something—subtler.

MRS. LOVETT: Potter?

TODD: Something—hotter.

MRS. LOVETT: Locksmith?

TODD: [stumped]

MRS. LOVETT: Lovely bit of clerk?

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TODD: Maybe for a lark.

MRS. LOVETT:
Then again, there's sweep
If you want it cheap
And you like it dark.

Try the financier—
Peak of his career.

TODD: That looks pretty rank.

MRS. LOVETT:
Well, he drank.
It's a bank
Cashier.

Last one really sold.
Wasn't quite so old.

TODD: Have you any beadle?

MRS. LOVETT:
Next week, so I'm told.
Beadle isn't bad till you smell it
And notice how well it's
Been greased.
Stick to priest.

[spoken]

Now this might be a bit stringy, but then, of
course, it's fiddle player.

TODD: This isn't fiddle player. It's piccolo
player.

MRS. LOVETT: How can you tell?

TODD: It's piping hot.

MRS. LOVETT: Then blow on it first!

TODD:
The history of the world, my sweet—

MRS. LOVETT:
Oh, Mr. Todd, ooh, Mr. Todd,
What does it tell?

TODD:
Is who gets eaten and who gets to eat.

MRS. LOVETT:
And, Mr. Todd, too, Mr. Todd,
Who gets to sell.

TODD: But fortunately, it's also clear—

BOTH:
That (But) everybody
Goes down well with beer

[spoken]

MRS. LOVETT: Since marine doesn't appeal
to you, how about Rear Admiral?

TODD: Too salty. I prefer General.

MRS. LOVETT: With or without his privates?
"With" is extra.

[sung]

TODD: What is that?

MRS. LOVETT:
It's fop.
Finest in the shop.
And we have some shepherd's pie peppered
With actual shepherd
On top.
And I've just begun.
Here's the politician: so oily
It's served with a doily—
Not one?

TODD:
Put it on a bun.
Well, you never know if it's going to run.

MRS. LOVETT:
Try the friar.
Fried, it's drier.

TODD:
No, the clergy is really
Too coarse and too mealy.

MRS. LOVETT:
Then actor—
It's compacter.

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TODD:

Yes, and always arrives overdone.
I'll come again when you
Have judge on the menu . . .

[spoken]

MRS. LOVETT: Wait! True, we don't have
judge—yet—but would you settle for the
next best thing?

TODD: What's that?

MRS. LOVETT: Executioner.

[sung]

TODD:

Have charity toward the world, my pet!

MRS. LOVETT:

Yes, yes, I know, my love.

TODD:

We'll take the customers that we can get.

MRS. LOVETT:

High-born and low, my love.

TODD:

We'll not discriminate great from small.
No, we'll serve anyone—
Meaning anyone—

BOTH:

And to anyone
At all!

“Not While I'm Around”

TOBIAS:

Nothing's gonna harm you,
Not while I'm around.
Nothing's gonna harm you,
No sir,
Not while I'm around.

Demons are prowling
Everywhere,
Nowadays.
I'll send 'em howling,
I don't care—

I got ways.

No one's gonna hurt you,
No one's gonna dare.
Others can desert you—
Not to worry,
Whistle, I'll be there.

Demons'll charm you
With a smile,
For a while,
But in time
Nothing can harm you,
Not while I'm
Around.

Not to worry, not to worry,
I may not be smart, but I ain't dumb.
I can do it.
Put me to it.
Show me something I can overcome.
Not to worry, mum.

Being close and being clever
Ain't like being true.
I don't need to, I won't never
Hide a thing from you,
Like some.

MRS. LOVETT:

Nothing's gonna harm you,
Not while I'm around!
Nothing's gonna harm you, Toby,
Not while I'm around.

TOBIAS: Two quid was in it,
Two or three—

[spoken] The gov'nor giving up his purse—
with two quid?

Not for a minute!
Don't you see? . . .

[sings]

Demons'll charm you
With a smile,
For a while,
But in time
Nothing's gonna harm you,
Not while I'm
Around!